



# NEWS

*from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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December 4, 1996

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**SPORT FISHING AND BOATING PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL:**  
**THE VOICE OF AMERICA'S ANGLERS AND BOATERS**

Unknown to most of America's 50 million anglers and 75 million boaters, a small group representing their interests is working at the highest levels of government to safeguard and enhance their outdoor pastimes.

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, established 3 years ago, provides guidance and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior through the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on government policies affecting recreational fishing and boating.

"The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council forms a sturdy bridge between anglers and boaters and the policies that affect their sports," said John Rogers, acting director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Packing tremendous knowledge of fishing and boating issues, the Council is made up of representatives of state natural resource agencies; the fishing and boating industries and associations; and experts in resource conservation, recreation, and public outreach.

Working with the Council, the Fish and Wildlife Service has taken several steps to improve America's recreational fisheries and aquatic systems.

The Council's first major accomplishment in 1994 was the *Recreational Fisheries Stewardship Initiative*, outlining major threats to recreational fisheries and aquatic systems and providing several specific proposals to combat them.

After the *Initiative* was enthusiastically endorsed by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and former Service Director Mollie Beattie, the Council got to work advancing policies to address issues they identified.

Early in 1995, the Council recommended a policy to improve administration of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to recreational fisheries. The Council's recommendation was based on concerns among anglers about conflicts where traditional fisheries management, including stocking of non-native sportfish, came into conflict with endangered species recovery efforts. The

Council's guidance in this area has been particularly important because the issue is a challenging one for the Service due to its obligations both to recover endangered species and support recreational fishing opportunities.

While this policy was being drafted, the Council was working on what has proven to be its biggest accomplishment to date: President Clinton's Executive Order 12962 on Recreational Fisheries. This historic milestone in fisheries management was signed in June 1995. The Executive Order acknowledged the important social, cultural, and economic benefits of fishing and required Federal departments and agencies to work together to improve recreational fisheries under their existing responsibilities and programs.

The Executive Order's two major requirements were establishment of an endangered species/recreational fisheries policy and a comprehensive fisheries conservation plan to guide Federal agencies in improving recreational fisheries and fishing opportunities. The Executive Order also charged the Council with monitoring Federal agencies' progress under the conservation plan.

Seven Cabinet-level agencies presented the *Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan* at a gathering of state fishery chiefs, conservation leaders, outdoor writers, and fishing and boating industry representatives during National Fishing week in June 1996. The Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service also announced the endangered species/recreational fisheries policy at that time.

Under the policy, the Service is currently working in areas such as the Colorado River, New England rivers, and the Columbia River to try to maximize fishing opportunities for anglers while addressing the needs of endangered species.

While the conservation plan outlined general guidelines on how to improve recreational fisheries, Federal agencies with a role in aquatic resource management are developing specific plans outlining their future efforts in this area. The Council will have an important role in evaluating Federal agencies' progress under these plans, which are due in December 1996.

In October 1996, the Council hosted a national recreational fisheries stakeholders meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, including representatives of state, Federal, and Tribal natural resource agencies; conservation groups; industry leaders; and anglers. The purpose of the meeting was to explore these groups' role in future fisheries management and how it can be better coordinated with Federal efforts, especially those outlined in the conservation plan.

On the council's recommendation, the Service is also convening other fisheries stakeholders meetings in its seven geographic regions to address the Service's role in and responsibilities for recreational fisheries management. Input from these meetings, as well as from the Phoenix meeting, will be considered by the Service when making future programmatic and policy decisions.

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# **FACTS**

*from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

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## **Accomplishments of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council**

The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council is a Federally chartered advisory committee established in 1993. The Council advises the Interior Department Secretary, through the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, on recreational fishing and boating issues.

The Council's 18 members, who serve 2-year terms, include state resource agency directors; representatives of fishing and boating industries and associations; and experts in resource conservation, recreation, and public outreach. The director of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies serve as *ex officio* members. A current listing of Council members is attached.

- o **January 1993** Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council established.
- o **April 1994** Council releases *Recreational Fisheries Stewardship Initiative* outlining major threats to fisheries and aquatic systems and recommending efforts to combat them. Top priority given to policy for "achieving balance" in the administration of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to recreational fisheries. Another was Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries.
- o **October 1994** Council convenes first in a series of fisheries "stakeholders" meetings in Phoenix, Arizona. Discussion focuses on relationship between endangered species recovery and providing recreational fisheries.
- o **November 1994** Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt formally endorses *Recreational Fisheries Stewardship Initiative*; says he will recommend Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries.
- o **January-December 1995** Council distributes information to 3 million anglers and boaters to promote the 1-800-ASK-FISH and 1-800-ASK-BOAT fishing and boating information hotlines.
- o **February 1995** Council releases "position paper" called *Conserving Federally Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species While Providing and Enhancing Recreational Fisheries Programs*.

- o **March 1995** Council releases special report called *The Impact of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program*.
- o **June 1995** President Clinton signs Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries requiring Federal agencies to improve fisheries within the context of their programs and responsibilities. Specifically, the Order required development of a policy to improve administration of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to recreational fisheries, required the development of a comprehensive fisheries conservation plan for Federal agencies, and broadened the Council's responsibilities by charging it with monitoring Federal agencies' progress under the plan.
- o **August 1995** Former Service Director Mollie Beattie requests the Council convene fisheries stakeholder meetings to compile recommendations on the appropriate role of the Service in recreational fisheries management.
- o **September 1995** Congress directs the Service to identify \$2.1 million in cost savings for its fisheries program, using input from stakeholders, in the 1997 budget (1996 budget totalled \$65 million); Beattie asks Council for recommendations.
- o **November 1995-April 1996** Council holds several stakeholder meetings, including state agency directors, state fisheries chiefs, representatives of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, conservation organizations, and industry representatives.
- o **December 1995** Council gives Beattie its fiscal year 1997 cost savings recommendations.
- o **December 1995** Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service announce draft policy on administration of the Endangered Species Act as it relates to recreational fisheries.
- o **June 1996** *Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan* unveiled.
- o **June 1996** *Finalized Policy for Conserving Species Listed or Proposed for Listing Under the Endangered Species Act While Providing and Enhancing Recreational Fisheries Opportunities* announced.
- o **August 1996** Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council completes recommendations on the appropriate role of the Service in fisheries management and presents them to Acting Service Director John Rogers. Council recommends additional stakeholder meetings at the national level as well as in each of the Service's seven geographic regions.

- o **August 1996** Council completes its first annual report on implementation of Executive Order. Agencies reported internal restructuring and planned strategies for implementing the *Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan*.
- o **October 1996** Service holds national fisheries stakeholders meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, and several other stakeholder meetings throughout the country.

For more information about the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council or to obtain copies of the cited documents, contact the Fish and Wildlife Service's Council Coordinator, 1033 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 200, Alexandria, VA 22314; telephone: 703-836-1392.



# **FACTS**

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## **Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Members**

(November 1996)

**John Rogers - *Ex officio***  
Acting Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Duane Shroufe - *Ex officio***  
President  
International Association of Fish  
and Wildlife Agencies

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### **Council Chair:**

Helen Sevier, CEO  
B.A.S.S., Incorporated

**Tom Bedell, President**  
Outdoor Technologies Group

**Michael Sciulla, Vice President**  
BOAT/U.S.

**Earl Bentz, President**  
Bentz Company

**Eddie Smith, CEO**  
Grady White Boats

**John Charvat**  
Brunswick Marine Group

**James Timmerman, Director**  
South Carolina Department of Natural  
Resources

**David Hall, Vice President**  
and General Manager  
The Nashville Network

**Hank Todd, Vice President**  
Business Development,  
Government and Tourism  
Carlson Companies, Inc.

**Ray Hobbs, Senior Vice President**  
General Merchandise Manager  
Wal-Mart Stores, Incorporated

**Steve Wilson, Director**  
Arkansas Game and Fish  
Commission

**Arva Jackson, retired**  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Administration

**Jack Wingate, President**  
American Fisheries Society

**William Miller, Chairman**  
American Sportfishing Association

**Rebecca Wodder, President**  
American Rivers

**Roy Montgomery**  
National Marine Manufacturers  
Association

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